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DEBRIEFING REPORT #12

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NAME : [REDACTED]

DATE OF DEBRIEF : 1 February 1972

NAME OF DEBRIEFER: [REDACTED]

25X1

SUBJECT : Summary Debrief - 30 February 1955 thru mid February 1956. It covers [REDACTED] from the "Women's Cell Block", his first Chinese cell mate, 4 days of visits in Peking and a physical exam conducted in mid February 1956

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25X1

Just before departing from the "Women's Cell Block" which would have been in [REDACTED] his first letter from the United States. This was a letter from a girl acquaintance whom he had known at the University. The end of that month he was moved to a different, small and very old cell block. The conditions under which he lived, however, remained unchanged. The food quality was still high, he had a stove in his cell, and he was able to have the small comforts of toothbrush, basin, etc., with him in his cell.

25X1

OSD review(s) completed. It was during the short time he spent in this cell block that one of those instances occurred which will always remain with a prisoner. While out in the exercise yard, accompanied by a particularly nasty and authoritative guard, he was severely reprimanded for having stopped his

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

2

strolling to look at a fancy embroidered bed spread which was hung over a line. For no really good reason the guard objected to this and [REDACTED]

25X1

feisty mood argued with the guard insisting it would do no harm. The two started shouting at each other; the guard cursing [REDACTED]

25X1

guard in English. The guard got fed up with this and summarily [REDACTED] out of the exercise yard and cutting his exercise period short. Each continued to berate the other and as they were moving out of the exercise yard, [REDACTED] he had just

25X1

passed, a very clear American voice, perhaps with a slight southern accent, shout an encouragement to him.

This American shouted something to the effect that

"that was the way to raise hell in this here hotel".

Dick shouted back to find out who the man was but he

never received a reply. Attempts in the future [REDACTED] part (including another shouting match) to get an answer were never successful.

25X1

[REDACTED] was moved again, this time to a newly repaired and painted cell block in another section of the prison with improvements such as running water in the building and a water type toilet at the end of the cell block. Again food quality remained

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

3

good and treatment in almost all respects the same.

These shifts from one cell to another were never easy. It meant that one had to get used to new surroundings and go through the painful process of discovering which guards were hyper-authoritative and which were lenient. It normally upset a prisoner for a week or so following these changes from cell to cell.

It was while he was in this cell, however, that his first packages from home arrived. This was considerably bigger and contained a great deal more items than the Red Cross parcel. The prison authorities decided to dole out the contents to him, so much at a time, and began with several cans already opened. This cell block was one of the hottest, muggiest and most poorly ventilated in which he had been kept in all his prison experience. A Danish ham, cans of salmon and some other similar materials went very quickly bad before he could eat them. He complained about this and a new system was introduced which was followed for all the rest of his prison experience. From here on the entire package would be given to him and the guard was left with a can opener so that when can opened, he handed it to the guard who then opened it for him. These packages were always very thoroughly inspected. In the first

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SECRET

25X1

SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

4

three or four months every single thing was gone through meticulously. As time went on spot checks were held of the items in the packages. [] first very carefully counted all of the items in the packages before he signed the inventory lists which accompanied the packages, but soon realized that the Chinese were taking nothing from them. They did keep razors, razor blades, and can openers out in the corridor. There were also times when reading material was withheld.

25X1

One small incident involving reading material which is interesting involved the book "Mutiny On The Bounty", which had been included in a package. They told him that it had arrived but that it was being withheld from him because it was a "sensational" story. He tried to explain it was a story based on a true incident. They pointed out that the cover had an extremely lurid scene depicting someone being tied to a mast and lashed. His interpreter interceded on his behalf and eventually he did receive the book, but without the cover.

Much to his relief on the 30th of August 1955 he was moved back to the cell from which he had previously come. This took him out of what had been one of the hottest and most uncomfortable cells in which he had been incarcerated.

On the 10th of September 1955 an individual whom he

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SECRET

SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

5

had never seen before came into the cell and in English very carefully read a paper which outlined the agreement which had been made between the United States and the People's Republic of China with respect to the exchange of civilians. When he finished reading it he asked Dick if he had any comment. [] of course, that this meant that he was getting out and commented only that this was wonderful and asked when he was to leave. The response was that this man would report that question to the warden. He left the paper with Dick, but there was never any other follow-up. [] believed that this agreement was signed during the newly begun ambassadorial talks between the United States and China.

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25X1

It was also during this month that he was given a copy of "Hsinhua" News Release announcing that the B-29 Crew plus four other Americans had left China for return to the United States. This was depressing news in a sense but when they had been separated previously he had prepared himself for the fact that they would not be considered as one group.

On the 20th of October 1955, Dick was taken to a new prison. This prison may well have been destroyed since that period of time but we have given it the title

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

SECRET

SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

6

of the "Pei Hai" Prison. This is because it was somewhere near the famous Pei Hai Park in Peking.

He was processed into the prison by being taken to the warden's office and here he saw for the first time a female interpreter who would be assigned to him for some period. She made her presence known immediately. He sat down on a stool placed before the warden's desk and crossed his legs and after glaring at him for some period of time, the girl told him to "behave himself". In response to his query as to what he was doing wrong, she ordered him to uncross his legs. He obviously had started off his Pei Hai Prison incarceration with an uncourteous gesture. The usual rules having to do with no shouting, no whistling, keeping the cell clean, no talking in the corridors, etc., were read to him. But it was also announced that it was in this prison he would begin his re-education.

The new cell block into which he was put was not connected to the other buildings. It had been recently constructed and was in good shape with running water in the building. The rest of this prison was very old, very run down, and very ramshackle.

His particular cell was about 8' wide and 12' long. The pallet or "kang" took up one side and there was a

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

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Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

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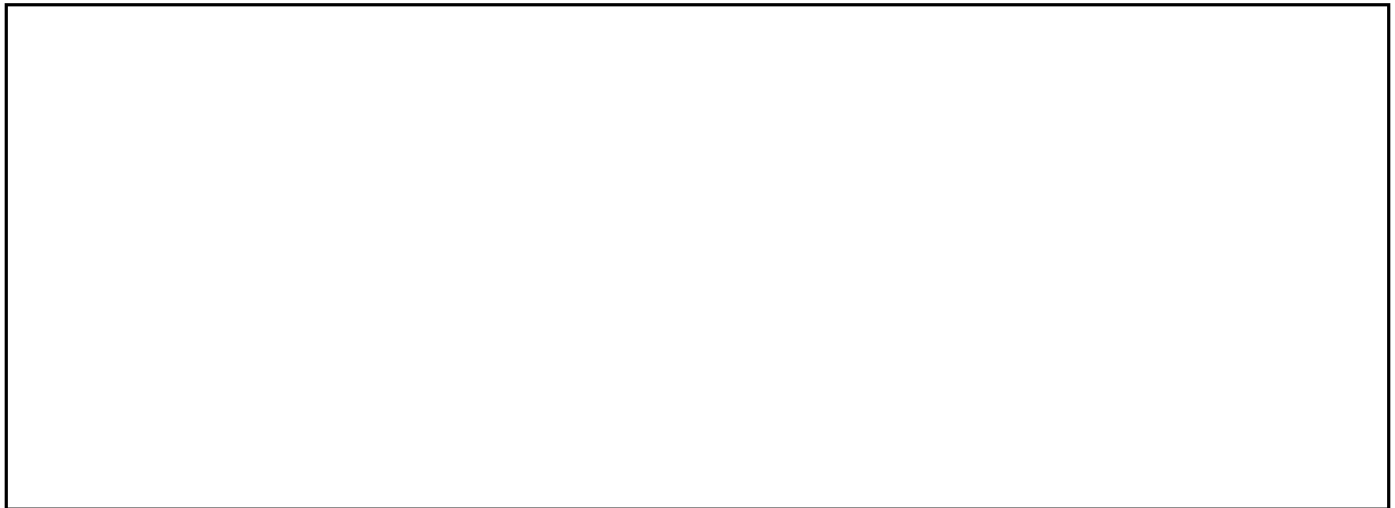
Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

8

as bad as it had been in the earlier days. It was at least spiced up occasionally with variety and the quantity was good.

This five weeks seemed particularly long because the rather intricate and complicated system of day dreaming which he had developed to keep himself occupied in that first year and seven months of solitary, had not been practiced for some time. He found it difficult to get back into that routine. This plus the nervousness always associated with the change of cells made this period without reading a very depressing and lonely one. He spent most of it just pacing back and forth in his cell.

25X1



He was the nicest cell mate [redacted] ever had in Peking. He was quiet, he spoke good English and was very interesting. [redacted] completely and considered him an extremely honestman. This cell mate

25X1

25X1

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

SECRET

SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

9

told him that before he was introduced into the cell he was told by the Chinese authorities that he was to be put with an American who was quite aggressive. They told him to be careful not to get into fights or arguments with this man. He was taken out every couple of months and asked a number of questions [redacted] He was asked what Dick's attitude was, how he conducted himself, whether he said anything against Mao, what his attitude toward the Chinese was and how he occupied himself during the day. Upon returning from these quiz sessions, his cell mate would [redacted] to say nothing and they would not discuss it for several days. This was because they were quite certain that guards hovered near by for the first day or two to try and determine whether or not his cell mate was reporting [redacted] these questions had been asked. After several days of a cooling off period, however, the cell mate would tell him what questions he had been asked and what he had said.

25X1

25X1

25X1

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

SECRET

SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

10

25X1

[redacted] called out of his cell for a briefing. This was a Sunday and therefore a very rare occurrence, as prisons were usually very quiet

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25X1

25X1

Later that same afternoon he was given a new padded suite, hat, padded overcoat and shoes. The next day (on the 10th) he started a routine which didn't vary for the next four days. He was taken out each morning (he in one automobile [redacted] and given a tour. They visited a collective farm, a cotton mill, Pei Hai Park, forbidden city, the summer palace and a dam site. Pretty much the same routine was followed at each place. They would visit a director's or official's office and the official would make a boring prepared statement which would be translated. They would then be given the tour. The warden seemed quite bored with the whole affair but the female interpreter seemed to be in her element. She apparently enjoyed being away from the office routine and played a predominant role during the day's trips. Although Jack [redacted] were not supposed to talk, they were able to talk a great deal and the interpreter did not stop them,

25X1

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

SECRET

SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

11

although she listened to whatever small comments they made to each other.

During these trips they were pretty much avoided by the people on the street. These people seemed to recognize that they had some kind of a police or military escort with them and would stay away. Dick was impressed particularly with the large number of Russians they saw. They visited a department store which was full of Russian women and even Russian music was being played on the PA system. They ate their lunches two days at small class B restaurants around the city. The warden and the interpreter ordered and the food was generally pretty good.

All-in-all it was an extremely wonderful feeling to be out in the open air. Boring as the speeches were, [] would have continued this every day if they would have allowed it. It was a refreshing change in the routine. The general attitude of the warden and the interpreter was that [] should be extremely grateful to the Chinese for this opportunity.

25X1

Following this trip there was no significant incident that occurred until mid-February 1956. [] were taken in the evening to a security bureau hospital for a physical examination. It was a relatively thorough

25X1

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

SECRET

SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

12

physical. Their eyes were checked, their ears, their teeth, their throats and their glands. They were tapped all over, their blood pressure and pulse was taken, and blood, urine, and stool samples were taken from both. They were given a chest X-ray and examined for rupture, piles, etc. There were several doctors involved each with his own specialty. They seemed quite competent.

The only thing that was said with regard to their physical condition was the [] that he had trachoma in both eyes. For several months he had noticed that when he was in the wind both eyes watered a great deal. He also noticed that when he awakened in the morning there were granules in the corners and his eyes were itching a great deal. He was weighed and at

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To keep himself in physical condition, [] been exercising for a period of from 30 to 60 minutes each morning. He did 25 push-ups, 50 sit-ups, 25 back arches, and a series of deep knee bends, toe touches, arm exercises and stretching exercises. The only thing that he could do during his outside exercise, however, was to stroll. The exercise yard was so small that trotting or running was difficult. He did do chin-ups

25X1

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

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Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

13

on the clothesline poles but this often led to altercations with the tower guards.

Approved For Release 2002/10/10 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300110015-6

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